Kosmas and Posey Introduce Bill to Minimize Human Spaceflight Gap

Bipartisan Legislation Would Help Maintain U.S. Leadership in Space

(Washington, DC) – Today, Congresswoman Suzanne Kosmas (FL-24) and Congressman Bill Posey (FL-15) introduced legislation to maintain a robust human spaceflight program, minimize the spaceflight gap, and protect Space Coast jobs.

The Human Spaceflight Capability Assurance and Protection Act would extend use of the International Space Station (ISS) through 2020, allow NASA to continue flying the Space Shuttle, and push to accelerate a next-generation NASA-developed space vehicle. A companion bill has been introduced by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) in the U.S. Senate.

“This bill is intended to maintain a robust human spaceflight program that will protect Space Coast jobs, enhance our national security, and generate scientific and technological advances that boost our economy,” said Congresswoman Kosmas. “While most agree that use of the Space Station should be extended through 2020, there is only one existing vehicle that we know can fully service and support the ISS, and that is the Shuttle. Our bill would extend the life of the ISS while allowing the Shuttle to continue flying in order to provide whatever support is needed for that extension.”

“At the same time, our legislation fills in some of what we feel was missing from the President’s proposal by instructing NASA to develop a clear plan for the future of human space exploration with set goals, timelines and a next-generation NASA vehicle,” Kosmas added.

“Our bill takes a critical first step toward closing the gap by extending Space Shuttle flights,” said Rep. Posey, a lead cosponsor of the bill. “The Augustine Panel said this was the only way to close the gap from this end and we do that in this bill. I’m pleased to join Representative Kosmas and Senator Hutchinson in forging bipartisan, bicameral legislation to close the space gap and keep America first in space.”

In addition to Kosmas and Posey, original cosponsors of the bill include Representatives Corrine Brown (D-FL), Kathy Castor (D-FL), Jim Costa (D-CA), Alan Grayson (D-FL), Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Ron Klein (D-FL), Stephen LaTourette (R-OH), Charlie Melancon (D-LA), John Mica (R-FL), Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Adam Putnam (R-FL), and Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL).

The Human Space Flight Capability Assurance and Enhancement Act of 2010 would:

- Allow for Shuttle extension to fully service and support ISS: Make shuttle retirement dependent on the availability of replacement capabilities for comparable size crew and cargo delivery, whether government-owned or commercial, or until it is conclusively demonstrated that the Space Shuttle cargo capabilities are not needed to ensure space station

viability;

- Maximize investment in ISS: Require International Space Station (ISS) operations and full utilization through at least 2020, and further establish the ISS National Laboratory operating mechanisms and procedures. Instructs NASA to report to Congress on what resources and equipment are needed for ISS extension;

- Develop New NASA-Led Vehicle: Provide for the acceleration of a government-owned human space flight capability to as close to 2015 as possible; Provide for the near-term evaluation of heavy-lift rocket vehicle design options, including Shuttle-derived and Constellation-derived options, to enable exploration beyond low-earth orbit and accelerate the start of vehicle design activity;

- Encourage Commercial Development: Directs NASA to issue safety requirements for human rating commercial crew vehicles; expand support for Commercial Orbital Space Transportation (COTS) to support ISS -- both for cargo and for eventual crew launch capability;

- Increase NASA Funding: Authorize top-level funding for all of NASA's mission activities, but would only address the human space flight policy issues. Provides increase over the President’s request of $1.3 billion for FY2011 and $2.1 billion for FY2012 for continuation of the Shuttle (at a rate of 2 missions a year) and additional ISS resources;

- Establish Exploration Vision: Reaffirm long-term goal of moving beyond low-Earth orbit whether to the Moon, Mars or alternative destinations.

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